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CONSOLIDATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECAM AND THE AFRICAN UNION

pp. 2, 7, 8



SECAM – AFRICAN UNION



Consolidating the relationship between SECAM and the African Union is in line with the vision of SECAM's founding fathers that SECAM, a continental organization of the Catholic Church, should work hand in hand with the continental body to improve the living conditions of Africans. In fact, close collaboration between SECAM and the African Union is indispensable to promote unity, peace, harmonious coexistence and sustainable development throughout the continent and its islands.

It is in recognition of this critical collaboration that SECAM was granted Observer Status by the African Union in 2015 and Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa, His Eminence Souraphiel Cardinal Berhaneyesus has been serving as SECAM's distinguished official representative.

SECAM continued taking significant steps by establishing working relationship with African Union Commissions (AUC), which envisions, "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own

citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. In this effort, the opening of SECAM-AUC Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, Capital City of Ethiopia and the Seat of African Union has taken place in January 2015 and then, on 19th August, 2015 it was signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the Commissioner for Political Affairs Commission and the President of SECAM.

In addition, the current SECAM leadership has strategically chosen to position the AU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa as the central coordinating point for the activities of the Symposium's Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) for the Fifth Phase of the Good Governance Project.

So, the reopening and appointment of the new Programme Officer for the Addis Ababa Liaison Office on 13 February 2024 marks a new phase and a new development in SECAM-African Union relations and the joining of forces for a better Africa.

Fr Rafael Simbine Junior

EDITORIAL



POPE CREATES STUDY GROUPS TO EXPLORE THEMES FROM SYNOD'S FIRST SESSION



Pope Francis establishes study groups to explore various themes that emerged from the Synod session in October 2023, and sets the dates for the second session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly.

The General Secretariat of the Synod announced on Saturday February 17, that Pope Francis has set the dates for the second session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly, which will take place from October 2 to 27, 2024.

The session will continue the work of the Synod on synodality on the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." It will be preceded by two days of spiritual retreat, from September 30 to October 1, with participants arriving in Rome on September 29.

Also on Saturday, Pope Francis released a chirograph establishing the creation of study groups to delve into some of the themes that emerged in the first Synod session.

The study groups will be formed by mutual agreement among the competent dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the General Secretariat of the Synod, which will coordinate them.

The document "Towards October 2024"

by the General Secretariat of the Synod, published on December 11, 2023, already emphasized that the next session would focus on how to live synodality at all levels in the Church.

This new papal document clarifies that some of the most significant themes which emerged from listening to the Churches will require a substantial amount of time for theological, canonical, and pastoral reflection.

The synthesis report approved by vote at the end of last October's session indicated several themes, such as the need to update some canonical norms, formation of ordained ministers, relationships between bishops and religious orders, and theological and pastoral research on the diaconate.

The study groups, as inferred from the document of the General Secretariat published in December and from Saturday's papal chirograph, will serve as useful tools to assist the universal Church's reflections on various topics.

They will not, however, directly constitute the material up for discussion at the next session of the Synod, which will focus on synodality itself, an expression of communion in the Church.

New consultants appointed

Also on Saturday, Pope Francis appointed 6 new consultants to the General Secretariat of the Synod, in addition to the current ten.

The new consultants are: Monsignor Alphonse Borras, Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese of Liège (Belgium); Gilles Routhier, professor of Theology at

Université Laval (Canada); Ormond Rush, associate professor of Theology at Australian Catholic University; Sister Birgit Weiler, M.M.S., professor of Theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru; Professor Tricia C. Bruce, president-elect of the Association for the Sociology of Religion; and, Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer, professor of Theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro.

Vatican News

POPE FRANCIS HAS APPOINTED EIGHT NEW BISHOPS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Msgr. Désiré Lenge Mukwenye



The Holy Father has appointed, on the 17th January 2014, the Reverend Désiré Lenge Mukwenye as bishop of Kilwa-Kasenga, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Msgr. Désiré Lenge Mukwenye has hitherto served as diocesan administrator of the same ecclesiastical circumscription. He was born on 2 March 1966 in Lwanza.

Msgr. Victor Ndione



On 10th February, the Holy Father has appointed the Reverend Victor Ndione, until now vicar general of the diocese of Nouakchott, Mauritania, as bishop of the aforementioned ecclesiastical circumscription. Msgr. Victor Ndione was born on 1 April 1973 in Thiès, Senegal.

Msgr. Jean Désiré Razafinirina



The Holy Father has appointed on the 12th February, the Reverend Jean Désiré Razafinirina, of the clergy of the diocese of Toliara, until now rector and professor at the Saint Jean Baptiste Major Seminary of Vohitsoa, as bishop of the diocese of Morombe, Madagascar. Msgr. Jean Désiré Razafinirina was born on 5 May 1975 in Morombe, in the archdiocese of Toliara.

Msgr. Wilbroad Henry Kibozi



The Holy Father has appointed on the 12th February the Reverend Wilbroad Henry Kibozi, of the clergy of the archdiocese of Dodoma, until now vice rector and professor at the Holy Family Major Seminary in Kahama, as auxiliary bishop of the metropolitan archdiocese of Dodoma, assigning him the titular see of Zallata. Msgr. Wilbroad Henry Kibozi was born on 30 April 1973 in Dodoma, Tanzania.

Msgr. Simon Peter Kamomoe and Wallace Ng'ang'a Gachihi

The Holy Father has appointed the 13th February the following as auxiliary bishops of the metropolitan archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya the Reverend:

- **Fr. Simon Peter Kamomoe**, of the clergy of the same archdiocese, until now administrator of the Holy Family Basilica Cathedral in Nairobi, assigning him the titular see of



Thubunae in Numidia. Msgr. Simon Peter Kamomoe was born on 26 November 1962 in Gatundu, district of Kiambu, in the archdiocese of Nairobi.

- **Fr. Wallace Ng'ang'a Gachihi**, of the local clergy, until now parish priest and coordinator of archdiocesan pastoral ministry, assigning him the titular see of Thucca in Mauretania.



Msgr. Wallace Ng'ang'a Gachihi was born on 26 March 1973 in Gatundu, district of Kiambu, in the archdiocese of Nairobi.

Msgr. Moïse Tinguiano



The Holy Father has appointed on the 22nd February the Reverend Moïse Tinguiano, of the clergy of Conakry, until now parish priest of Saint Augustin of Taouyah, as first bishop of the diocese of Boké, a new ecclesiastical circumscription erected the same date by Pope Francis, with territory taken from the archdiocese of Conakry.

Msgr. Moïse Tinguiano was born on 11 December 1977 in Benty.

Msgr. Aurelio Gazzera



The Holy Father has appointed on February 23, 2024, the Reverend Fr. Aurelio Gazzera, O.C.D., until now director of Caritas for the diocese of Bouar, as coadjutor bishop of Bangassou, Central African Republic.

Msgr. Aurelio Gazzera, was born on 27 May 1964 in Cuneo, Italy, and entered the minor seminary of the Descalced Carmelites of Arenzano in 1974.

Solidarity with Burkina Faso

MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SECAM



Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo



Mgr Laurent Dabire

*“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”
(Matt 2:18)*

Accra, February 26, 2024

**To His Excellency Bishop Laurent B. DABIRE,
Bishop of Dori (Burkina Faso)**

Your Excellency and My Dear Brother,

I was profoundly disturbed upon hearing about the tragic incident on Sunday, February 25, 2024, which led to the loss of 15 lives within the serene congregation of the Catholic Community of Essakane-Village, who were assembled for prayer. I vehemently condemn this despicable terrorist act.

On behalf of all the Bishops of Africa, I extend my condolences to you, the Bishops of Burkina Faso, and the families of the deceased. In this Lenten season, I share in your sorrow and pray for the Lord to bring you comfort.

Through this expression of ecclesial communion, I also wish a speedy recovery for the injured and express my closeness to the Burkinabe people.

Fridolin Cardinal AMBONGO

**Metropolitan Archbishop of Kinshasa
President of SECAM**

CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AFRICA EMPOWERS ITS AFRICAN UNION LIAISON OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA



A delegation from the Secretariat of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 9th to 14th February to relaunch the SECAM-AU Liaison Office. At this occasion, SECAM Secretary General, Fr Rafael Simbine Junior, thanked the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia for facilitating the installation and relaunching processes of this Liaison Office. He congratulated Most Rev. Teshome Fikre Woldetensale for his appointment by Pope Francis as Coadjutor Bishop of Emdeber, Ethiopia, and announced the appointment of Rev. Fr. Stephen Okello for the purpose of this Liaison Office.

In 2015, SECAM was granted Observer Status at the African Union (AU) with the aim of amplifying the Church's voice from Africa, Madagascar and the Islands on critical issues such as good governance, sustainable development and the promotion of servant leadership across the continent and its islands.

“Consequently, the close collaboration between SECAM and the African Union is deemed essential for achieving unity, peace, harmonious coexistence and continuous development across the continent and its islands”, said Fr Rafael Simbine Junior in a congratulation message to the new Bishop of Emdeber, on the 11th February 2024. He precised that, in alignment with these goals, “the current leadership has strategically chosen to establish the AU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa as the focal point for the activities of the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) of the Symposium”, particularly as an important step into the Fifth Phase of the

Good Governance Project of this department of SECAM.

The General Secretary expressed the sincere appreciation of SECAM to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia through Most Rev. Teshome Fikre for appointing Rev. Fr. Stephen Okello to work with them in order to achieve the mission assigned to SECAM -AU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa which is now officially relaunched.

Fr. Stephen Okello, Liaison Officer

During this stay in Addis Ababa, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between SECAM Secretariat's Management and the Major Superior of the Consolata Fathers who assigned Rev Fr. Stephen Okello, a consulate Priest, as a Liaison Officer for SECAM-AU office in Addis Ababa.

The delegation of SECAM Secretariat had visited the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat and was received in an audience by Most Rev. Teshome F. Woldetensale,

Coadjutor Bishop of Emdeber, Ethiopia.

“Counting on your usual fraternal disposition and understanding, we entrust this new office to your full supervision, with the aspiration that it will serve as an additional instrument of the Church in Africa, aimed at the implantation and growth of the Kingdom of God on the continent and in the Islands”, hoped Fr Rafael Simbine Junior.

The Secretary General of SECAM was accompanied in this mission by his Second Deputy in charge of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission (JPDC), Fr Jean Germain Rajoelison, and with Mrs. Mavis Anima Bonsu, Head of Finance and Administration at SECAM Secretariat.

This SECAM-AU Liaison Office relaunching in Addis Ababa is a proof of the exemplary collaboration between the

Symposium and the Episcopal Conference of Ethiopia across various domains, particularly in fostering a positive relationship between Catholic Church in Africa and the African Union.

It was also the opportunity for the Secretary General to convey the congratulations of the Bishops of Africa and its Islands to the new ordained Bishop. Representing all the Bishops of Africa and its Islands, Fr Rafael Simbine Junior declared: “I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Your Excellency, Most Rev. Teshome Fikre, on your appointment and ordination as Coadjutor Bishop of Emdeber”. He expressed his profound gratitude to His Eminence Souraphiel Cardinal Berhaneyesus, Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa, for serving as SECAM's official representative at the African Union.

Secam

Evangelization

Jubilee 2025: Embarking on a Journey of Hope

His Holiness Pope Francis has declared the observance of an ordinary jubilee set to take place in 2025 in Rome, Italy. This forthcoming jubilee follows in the footsteps of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, initiated by Saint Pope John Paul II from December 24, 1999, to January 6, 2001, and the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2016, marking the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The responsibility for orchestrating this significant global event has been entrusted to the Dicastery for Evangelization, located in Vatican City.

Preparations are currently underway in Rome for the upcoming jubilee, under the inspired theme “Pilgrims of hope,” a concept deeply resonant with Pope Francis. Monsignor Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, has been appointed to lead the organization of the jubilee in 2025.

This enduring tradition, initially proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300, recurs every 25 years, drawing thousands of faithful pilgrims to the



revered tombs of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. As part of the jubilee observance, these pilgrims will pass through the Holy Door, a rite symbolizing renewal and redemption. This sacred portal, customarily sealed during "Ordinary Time," will be unsealed by the Pope himself, allowing pilgrims to traverse it in pursuit of plenary indulgence and absolution.

In anticipation of the Jubilee in 2025, Pope Francis has dedicated the interim years to contemplation on specific themes. The year 2023 was allocated for reflection on the pivotal doctrines of the four Conciliar Constitutions, while 2024 has been devoted to prayer, setting the spiritual stage for pilgrims to adequately prepare themselves for this extraordinary dispensation of grace.

Fr. Alfred Bebotu



Jubilee 2025

GENERAL CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2024

24 December

Opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica



Photo Vatican Media

JANUARY 2025

24-26 January

Jubilee of the World of Communications

FEBRUARY 2025

8-9 February

Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

16-18 February

Jubilee of Artists

21-23 February

Jubilee of Deacons

MARCH 2025

8-9 March

Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

28 March

24 Hours for the Lord

28-30 March

Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

APRIL 2025

5-6 April

Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers

25-27 April

Jubilee of Teenagers

28-30 April

Jubilee of People with Disabilities

MAY 2025

1-4 May

Jubilee of Workers

4-5 May

Jubilee of Entrepreneurs

10-11 May

Jubilee of Musical Bands

16-18 May

Jubilee of Confraternities

24-25 May

Jubilee of Children

30 May - 1 June

Jubilee of Families, Grandparents and the Elderly



JUNE 2025

7-8 June

Jubilee of Ecclesial Movements, Associations and New Communities

9 June

Jubilee of the Holy See

14-15 June

Jubilee of Sport

20-22 June

Jubilee of Governments

23-24 June

Jubilee of Seminarians

25 June

Jubilee of Bishops

25-27 June

Jubilee of Priests

28 June

Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

JULY 2025

28 July - 3 August

Jubilee of Youth

SEPTEMBER 2025

15 September

Jubilee of Consolation

20 September

Jubilee of Justice

26-28 September

Jubilee of Catechists

OCTOBER 2025

5 October

Jubilee of Migrants

8-9 October

Jubilee of Consecrated Life

11-12 October

Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

18-19 October

Jubilee of the Missions

30 October - 2 November

Jubilee of the World of Education



NOVEMBER 2025

16 November

Jubilee of the Poor

22-23 November

Jubilee of Choirs

DECEMBER 2025

14 December

Jubilee of Prisoners



Justice - Peace - Development

WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2024: "GOD WALKS WITH HIS PEOPLE"

The 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees will be celebrated on Sunday, September 29, 2024. "God walks with his people" is the theme of Pope Francis' Message for this World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

The Holy Father's Message focuses on the itinerant dimension of the Church, with special attention to migrant brothers and sisters, who are a contemporary icon of the Church on the move.

Pope Francis' suggestion is a journey to be made together, synodally, overcoming every obstacle and threat, in order to reach the true homeland. Along the way, wherever one finds oneself, it is essential to recognize the presence of God who walks with his people, giving them guidance and protection at every step.

Therefore, the starting point is to



recognize the Lord present in his people, the Emmanuel who, in every migrant, knocks at the door of our heart and offers himself for the encounter.

First celebrated in 1914, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees is an occasion to encourage Catholics worldwide and all people of good will to remember and pray for those displaced by conflict, persecution, and economic difficulties.

Simson Mwale

CHURCH HELPS MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN GHANA



The Catholic Church in Ghana supports both internal migrants and refugees from neighboring countries, particularly in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The 22nd February, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Archbishop Henryk Mieczyslaw Jagodzinski, visited the reception centers for asylum seekers in Tarikom, in the Western Bawku district, to obtain first-hand information on the situation of the refugees, who mainly come from Burkina Faso, from where they fled due to the jihadist attacks.

Stephen Yakubu, Regional Minister of the Upper East Region and Chairman of the Regional Security Council, said more than 1,160 asylum seekers had been taken to reception centers and praised the Catholic Church, particularly the Navrongo-Bolgatanga diocese, for their help in dealing

with the situation.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Archbishop Henryk Mieczyslaw Jagodzinski, visited the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga and reiterated the Catholic Church's commitment to protecting and supporting vulnerable people, regardless of their origins and religious beliefs, saying that People, including the displaced, the poor and those deemed "undesirable," are of particular concern to Pope Francis, who has repeatedly advocated for comfort and support for these people in his sermons, teachings and programs.

"Of course, our mission as a Catholic Church is spiritual, our goal is the salvation of the soul," said Archbishop Jagodzinski." But as St. James writes in his letter, faith without works is dead, and we must not only proclaim love for our neighbor, but also do something for others."

A network of several religious orders and organizations is trying to help migrants and asylum seekers: the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) and the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent De Paul.

Secam with Agenzia Fides

ELEVENTH PERMANENT COUNCIL OF CERAO HELD IN ABIDJAN



The Permanent Council of the United Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (CERAO/RECOWA), which brings together the Catholic bishops of the 16 countries of West Africa, held its 11th session at the CERAO Center for Pastoral and Mission in Abidjan, from February 3 to 7, 2024, around the theme “For a synodal Church as Communion, Participation and Mission: the road traveled and still to be traveled”.

During this session, the bishops thanked the Church of Côte d'Ivoire and urged the faithful in West Africa to harmonize synodality with evangelization and inclusiveness accompanied by true conversion. For them, by convening a synod on synodality, Pope Francis drew attention to the need for everyone in the Church to walk together, to listen to each other, to expand spaces for exchange and dialogue in order to attune the Church to the demands of our time.

Continuing the synod on synodality, they reaffirmed their commitment to promoting sociocultural and family val-

ues such as communion, fraternity, participation, welcome, solidarity and sharing.

The process of building a synodal Church and the spirit of synodality requires the participation of all in the life and mission of the Church, on the basis of their baptismal dignity and according to their vocations, charisms and spiritual gifts. Indeed, this calls for a mobilization of all in the Church in favor of maximum missionary co-responsibility. The indispensable role of diocesan bishops in leading and coordinating the synodal process in their dioceses was clearly underlined.

They finally urged every citizen of the countries of the sub-region to remain strong in the construction of a true fraternity which eliminates all forms of tribalism, ethnocentrism and insecurity which deeply erode the fabrics of peace and love in our region.

Source: Cerao/Recowa

NIGERIA: THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS URGED THE GOVERNMENT “TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY”

“The legitimacy of government depends on its capacity to protect life and property”. This is the statement of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) ending the first plenary meeting of year 2024.

Indeed, during their first plenary meeting in Abuja, from 16 to 22 February, 2024, Archbishop Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji, President of the CBCN, urged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led government to be proactive and “take urgent steps” to secure Nigerians’ lives and property. It was in his opening address at this Plenary Assembly on Sunday, February 18.

In the Communiqué issued at the end of this plenary meeting, they spoke about the different subjects covered by this assembly such as: the Synod on Synodality, the Declaration by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Fiducia Supplicans*, the situation of the Nation, the promotion of social cohesion, good governance and hope.

For the Bishops, the first part of the Synod on Synodality for the Universal Church held at the Vatican from 4 to 29 October 2023, “was an enriching and engaging experience within the Church”. “Synodality is an expression of the nature of the Church as communion”, they commented.

Reflecting about the situation of the Nation, they noted that “insecurity has attained yet a higher scale than we had ever seen before in the land”: insurgents, armed herdsmen, bandits and the so-called unknown gunmen have continued to unleash terror in different



Most. Rev. Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji

parts of the country, kidnapping for ransom, etc. “We express strong solidarity with our people who are suffering in the seriously deteriorating situation of the nation, especially in the areas of security and economy”, they said.

The Bishops Conference “urge government to urgently address the increasing disaffection and restiveness spreading across the population, in order to avoid a descent into chaos and anarchy”. The Catholic Church in Nigeria encourages the government’s effort to end insecurity and recommends that the ongoing discussion about the creation of State Police be carefully studied. Bishops call on the government to promote transparency, good governance, social cohesion and peace.

Secam

OBITUARY

CÔTE D’IVOIRE : DEATH OF MSGR. PAUL SIMÉON AHOUANAN

The Archdiocese of Bouaké announced the passing unto glory of Most Rev. Paul Siméon Ahouanan Djro, OFM, after years of battling health issues. The emeritus archbishop Paul Siméon Ahouanan died on Monday, February 12, 2024, in Abidjan, at the age of 72, after 28 years of episcopate. As a Franciscan religious, he devoted his life to serving God and his community.



BISHOPS COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING INTEGRATION IN SYNODALITY



The bishops who are members of the Permanent Council of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of the Central African Region (ACERAC) met in Brazzaville (Congo), as part of its annual ordinary session.

Held from February 13 to 15, 2024, the meeting took place at the headquarters of ACERAC in the Congolese capital, under the aegis of Mgr. Edmond Djitangar Goetbe, Archbishop of N'Djamena, President of the Conference of Bishops of Chad and President in office of ACERAC.

It began with a Mass and an opening ceremony, and the work brought together the Presiding bishops of the Episcopal Conferences of the five other countries of the association: Cameroon, Gabon, Central Africa, Equatorial Guinea and Congo host country.

At the opening, Father Antonio Mabilia, secretary general, presented the main issues of the meeting, then the president during his speech congratulated his colleagues for having agreed to celebrate Ash Wednesday mass outside their

dioceses and countries, respective, favoring the character of Church-family.

Among other things, the participants dealt with files relating to the Catholic University of Central Africa (UCAC) based in Yaoundé (Cameroon) at the head of which a new rectoral team has just been appointed and to the revision of the statutes of this episcopal association.

The members of the Permanent Council of ACERAC also examined a series of important questions which nourish the current affairs of the Church and the life of this sub-regional body, which is increasingly succeeding in establishing the dynamics of the integration, and above all to make visible the notion of Church-family. This is in line with the orientations of the Holy Father who advocates synodality within the universal Church.

The next ACERAC Plenary Assembly is scheduled for July 2025 in N'Djamena, Chad.

Aristide Ghislain Ngouma

ACEAC

DR CONGO: CATHOLIC BISHOPS URGE “TO INTENSIFY PRAYERS FOR PEACE”



The National Catholic Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO) appeals to solidarity with the people of the Eastern part of DR Congo through intensified prayer and charitable action. This call was made in a statement issued February 20, by the Most Rev. Marcel Utambi Tapa, Archbishop of Kisangani and President of CENCO who encourages Local Ordinaries to offer Holy Mass for peace.

Archbishop Marcel Utambi Tapa specifies that the insecurity situation in the country has been “deteriorating, especially in the eastern part”, and calls on the “whole Church to intensify prayers for peace.” Then, he recommends that “a special prayer for peace be said at the end of each Mass, as the Church does from time to time in certain circum-

stances.”

The President of CENCO further recommends that “each Bishop finds a day when a Mass will be celebrated in his Diocese to pray for peace in the country and particularly in the Eastern part.”

Violence in Eastern DRC has created a severe humanitarian crisis with more than 5.5 million people displaced from their homes, reportedly the third-highest number of internally displaced people in the world. More than 120 armed groups are fighting for control of the Eastern DRC, a region rich with natural resources.

Source: ACI Africa

AMECEA

CARDINAL RUGAMBWA FROM TANZANIA TOOK POSSESSION OF ROME’S ‘CHURCH OF THE ARTISTS’



Cardinal Protase Rugambwa took possession of his titular church, Santa Maria in Montesanto – one of the twin churches that sits in Rome’s Piazza del Popolo – on Sunday, 18th February 2024.

During a solemn Mass on Sunday 18th February, the rite of possession of a titular church took place in the Church of Santa Maria in Montesanto, Rome (Italy). For this important ceremony, the

Tanzanian cardinal Rugambwa was joined by priests from the Diocese of Rome as well as by senior prelates including Cardinals Arthur Roche, Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle, and Robert Sarah. It was in the presence of Sister Raffaella Petrini, the Secretary General of the Governorate of the Vatican City, the first woman to hold the position.

A special bond between the Church and artists

Santa Maria in Montesanto is a famous baroque church built in the second half of the 17th century over the site of an earlier church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and under the care of the Carmelite Friars. In 1951 Pope Pius XII established the Mass of the Artists and the church was selected as its seat. The tradition of the Mass of the Artists continues in this church today and is held every Sunday from the end of October to the end of June.

Tanzania's second cardinal elector

Cardinal Protase Rugambwa, Metropolitan Archbishop of Tabora (Tanzania),

was born on 31 May 1960 in Bunena. He was ordained priest for the Diocese of Rulenge-Ngara, on September 2, 1990, by Pope St. John Paul II, during his 10-day apostolic visit to Tanzania and several other African countries. In January 2008, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Rugambwa as the bishop of the Diocese of Kigoma and in 2012 he was appointed as adjunct secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and president of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

Elevated by Pope Francis to the College of Cardinals in the consistory held on September 30, 2023, Cardinal Rugambwa was appointed Metropolitan Archbishop of Tabora on November 10, 2023. He is Tanzania's second cardinal elector. Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, Tanzania's other cardinal elector, will turn 80 on August 5, 2024.

Source: Catholic News Agency

CATHOLIC MEDIA HOUSES IN ZAMBIA AND MALAWI ENCOURAGED TO BE MORE PROACTIVE



The 12-day Resource Mobilization Training organized by the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) which began on 13th February 2024 has come to an end. Closing the workshop, Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops through the ZCCB Secretary General Rev. Father Francis Mukosa called on

participants to put into practice the knowledge and skills acquired for the betterment of their institutions.

Fr. Mukosa says the workshop will help the institutions to raise funds for their activities as opposed to depending solely on their bishop to provide for their financial needs.

He states that resource mobilization is a very important aspect of the ministry, especially now that most institutions are struggling to get funding, hence the training has come at the right time.

Fr. Mukosa has since advised the participants to show the fruits of the training as these are the expectations of the Bishops in their respective dioceses.

And AMECEA Social Communications Coordinator Fr. Andrew Kaufa SMM has encouraged participants to be more proactive and aggressive in looking for resources. He echoed the importance of

the workshop and stressed the need to reduce dependency.

The workshop which was attended by Diocesan Communication Coordinators and Catholic media houses across the Episcopal Conferences of Zambia and Malawi covered a number of ways to mobilise resources such as project proposal writing, financial reporting, diversification, policy development and building reserve funds among others.

Amecea

IMBISA

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ZIMBABWE: WARNS OF INCREASING POVERTY IN THE COUNTRY



The Bishops of Zimbabwe warn of increasing poverty in their country, reported Fides Agency on February 20. The Zimbabwean Bishops' Conference emphasizes that the government's decision to increase taxes while ordinary citizens struggle to afford one meal a day "has worsened the conditions for the families".

"For most older people and especially for the poor, life has become incredibly expensive. Raw materials are becoming more and more expensive", they added. The controversial national elections in August 2023 have also brought the political system to such a standstill that, according to the bishops, "many people fear that we are moving towards a one-party state and democracy slowly dies". "As a result of bad policies, the

disastrous economic system and their devastating effects, many people are falling into despair," says the message from the bishops, who call not to succumb to the temptation of despair, but above all to pray. "Prayer is not an escape route. It is a way to find solutions to the challenges we face in our world and in our country", they emphasize.

The message therefore calls on people to use Lent to intensify their prayer and relationship with God so that "we as Christians can become beacons of hope in a desperate country and a desperate world." Despite a good recovery of the country's economy in 2021 and 2022, rates of poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity remain high.

Secam with Agenzia Fides

NEW ATTACKS IN MOZAMBIQUE TARGET CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES



Terrorists attributed to Islamic State jihadists attacked the Mazeze administrative post in the Chiúre district of Cabo Delgado on 12 February and set fire to the church, rectory and offices of the Mission of Our Lady of Africa, as well as destroying critical infrastructure such as the hospital and market.

In an interview with Rádio Pax of the Catholic Archdiocese of Beira, the local parish priest reported that there were no victims but that the only possessions he managed to save from the fire were the Blessed Sacrament and the Baptism and Marriage books.

Other sources told the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need that the attacks targeted Christian communities, forcing priests, nuns and other Church personnel to seek refuge in the cities.

The crisis in northern Mozambique, which began in 2017, is mainly contained in the natural gas-rich province of Cabo Delgado. More than a million people have been uprooted in this bloody conflict and around 4,000 people have been killed in the last four

years.

"Let us not forget: war is a defeat, always"

"The violence against defenseless populations, the destruction of infrastructure, and insecurity are again rampant in the province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, where the Catholic mission of Our Lady of Africa in Mazezeze was also set on fire in recent days," Pope Francis said after the Sunday Angelus prayer at St. Peter's Square February 18.

"Let us not forget: war is a defeat, always. Wherever there is warfare, the populations are exhausted, they are tired of war, which is always pointless and inconclusive, and brings only death, only destruction, and will never lead to the solution to problems," said Francis, who visited Mozambique in September 2019.

La Croix International

CERNA

EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION OF MSGR. DAVIDE CARRARO, NEW BISHOP OF ORAN, ALGERIA



The Catholic Church in Algeria welcomed with great joy the new bishop of Oran, Msgr. Davide Carraro, on the occasion of his episcopal consecration as bishop on January 26, 2024, his birthday, in the Sacré-Cœur Cathedral, in Oran.

The new pastor of the diocese of Oran, was consecrated bishop by two of his predecessors at Oran Cathedral: Msgr Jean-Paul Vesco, Msgr Alphonse Georger, the third consecrating bishop being Msgr Michèle Tomasi (Italy), the bishop of his diocese of origin.

Most Reverend Davide Carraro, P.I.M.E., was appointed as bishop of Oran, Algeria, by the Holy Father, on October 22, 2023. Until his appointment, he was vicar general of Alger.

Davide Carraro, was born on 26 January 1977, studied philosophy in Italy and theology in the Philippines, and was ordained a priest on 27 May 2006.

He held the roles of envoy in Algeria (2006) and missionary in the diocese of Laghouat (2007-2008 and 2017-2019). Following studies in classical Arabic in Egypt (2008-2011), he served as a missionary in Côte d'Ivoire (2012-2017), missionary in the archdiocese of Alger (since 2019), vicar general in Alger (since 2022) and local referent for the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions in Algeria and Tunisia.

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